

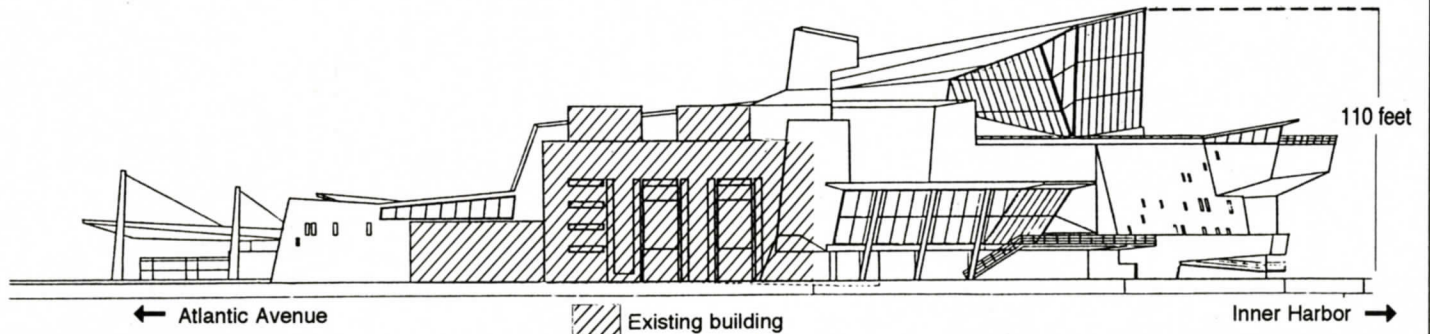
# THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 16

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

November-December 1994

## Proposed New England Aquarium



The New England Aquarium is planning to more than double in size its on Central Wharf on the waterfront. The proposal is for a 95,000-sq.-ft.-addition to the 75,000 sq.-ft., 25-year-old facility, extending Central Wharf east to the harbor in and southwards by 25 feet. The new building is 110 feet high at its highest point and will house the "World of Water," including a 1 million-gallon ocean tank (the existing tank holds about 200,00 gallons) and habitats of sea coasts, rivers and lakes.

The architects are Schwartz/Silver of Boston and the expansion will cost about \$70 million, which has yet to be raised. If funding is forthcoming, completion of design (one year), permitting (18 months), and construction (three and one-half years) will take six years.

## Boston Streets to be Remade

Major Boston thoroughfares are being redesigned and upgraded. Although most are under the purview of Boston's Public Works Department, several projects are private-sector initiatives. **Cambridge Street** is the subject of a \$350,000 design and engineering contract and some \$3 million is expected to be spent on implementation. Reconstruction plans for **Massachusetts Avenue** from City Hospital to the Charles River have generated many ideas, the most challenging being to run Mass. Ave. in a tunnel under the former Chester Square and recreate the historic Bulfinch-designed open space.

Northeastern University created a new "gateway" green space on **Huntington Avenue** at Gainsborough Street. Boston University is looking at big changes to **Commonwealth Avenue** from Kenmore Square to the B. U. Bridge. The revitalized **Downtown Crossing auto-restricted zone** was rededicated recently, and the City is proposing to extend the ARZ south to include Temple Place. As the MBTA plans proceed on **Washington Street** in the South End/Lower Roxbury, (1995 begins the 18th year of the transit study) a complete redesign is in the works. **Washington Street** from Forest Hills to Egleston Square is now almost done, seven years after the Orange Line was relocated.

Mayor Menino has announced the creation of a citywide "Main Streets" program to improve the appearance and marketability of business districts. Up to 20 business districts could benefit. Call the Mayor's office at 635-4000 for more information.

**The MBTA's new "Crosstown Buses"** are not exactly crowded. The three new Boston/Cambridge bus routes are carrying only about 40 percent of the expected ridership. The bus routes, inaugurated in September at an operating cost of \$2 million a year, are designed to improve access to the Longwood and B. U./City Hospital medical areas by providing "limited-stop" service every 15 to 20 minutes and connections with rapid transit lines.

Ridership on the three routes was expected to be about 7,500 a day, according to the MBTA, and it was anticipated that a large number of riders would switch from other local buses. Recent ridership figures show that ridership on the CT1 bus (Central Sq.-B. U./City Hospital) at about 1,500 daily riders accounts for about half of the total ridership for the three routes. The CT2 (Kendall-Ruggles station) and CT3 (Beth Israel Hosp.-Andrew station) are carrying about 700 riders per day each. Transit activists continue to call for the MBTA to move on plans for a circumferential rail service that would connect the Red, Orange and Green lines and would attract 18,000 new transit riders.

**A ballfield at City Hall?** From 190 entries for the City Hall Plaza Ideas competition, Mayor Menino awarded five prizes. Four winning entries were really visual design presentations without much emphasis on programming and ideas despite the call for entries that pushed ideas over designs. One winning entry was a written essay with no design drawing. Conventional grass expanses and history were out, and judges and entrants saw what seems right for City Hall: technological and artistic interventions; lovable, sacred spaces; friendly entrances; and food-based commercial activity at the edges.

Now the hard work begins of transforming these visions to reshape the space to bring out the potential inherent in the Plaza's location, size and setting. A good start for public input to the public domain.



## Quotes of the Year

"[The Massachusetts House of Representatives is] one of the greatest deliberative bodies in the world."  
Charles Flaherty, Speaker of the House

"Debt Ridden: Connecting North and South Stations would close a crucial gap."  
Boston Globe headline for story on MBTA financing gaps and problems

"No one's contemplating raising tolls."  
Lt. Governor Paul Cellucci on rumors that MassPike tolls will go up to fund the Central Artery.

"Employment was the amnesia for this project; now the amnesia is wearing off."  
John White, East Boston APAC

"I am told that all the mitigation programs are funded, environmental and non-environmental."  
Cathleen Douglas Stone, Boston's Chief of Environmental Services

"The current plan is not applicable to the future."  
Marisa Lago, Boston's Economic Development Officer, on the Boston 2000 surface artery restoration process plan

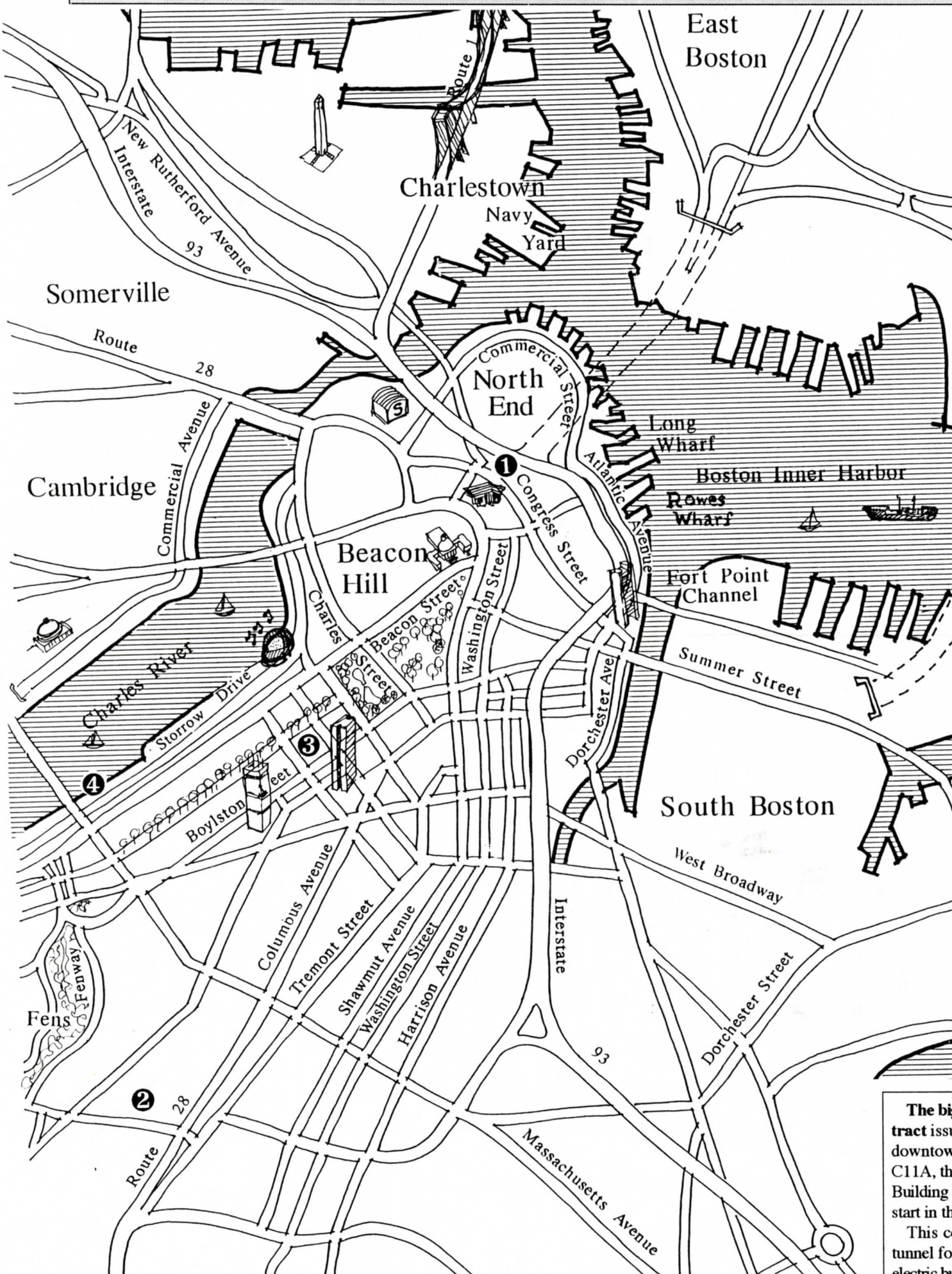
"The duties I was hired to perform have been completed."  
Peter Berlandi on why he resigned as a lobbyist for Bechtel, Central Artery management consultants

"I don't like elevators or escalators. I take the stairs."  
Larry Giordano, ex-Public Safety Commissioner

"It's taking advantage of an opportunity. It's a one-way delivery system, and that's the way I want it."  
Transportation Sec. James Kerasiotes on using Berlandi to get the attention of executives at Bechtel.

"Where is my seat at the table?"  
Rosemarie Ruggerio, East Boston, on lack of participation at the Boston Conference (April)

"If we had to pay off all businesses [severely affected by Central Artery construction] it could cost as much as the total cost of the project."  
Peter Zuk, director of the CA/T, at a City Council hearing.



**1 The North End Merchants Parcel 7**  
Group has submitted a plan to bid to become "master tenant" of the retail, office and parking space in the new vent building and Parcel 7, about 40,000 sq. ft. and 60,000 sq. ft. respectively with 350 parking spaces. Parcel 7 was formerly an open-air parking lot for City Hall employees next to Haymarket MBTA station. The vent building will also have the massive ventilation system of the depressed Central Artery. While they expect competitive bidders, the group feels it should be favored because of losses businesses will incur during Central Artery construction and prior verbal promises.

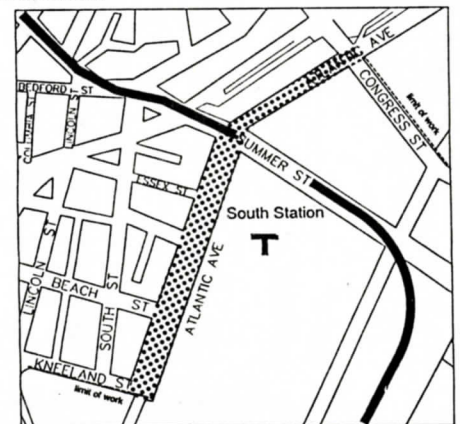
**2** A remnant of the Southwest Corridor project, widening and fixing Ruggles Street between Columbus Avenue and Huntington Avenue is finally going to happen. The project is being done by the MBTA with heavy involvement by the Boston Transportation Department. Issues include improving the traffic signal coordination, providing better bicycle/pedestrian access along Ruggles Street, and preserving land Wentworth College wants for soccer fields while improving traffic flow and safety. The designer is Green Engineering.

**3** On Boylston Street in Back Bay, The New England has just completed sidewalk improvements between Berkeley and Clarendon streets as part of the renovation of the commercial first floor of 501 Boylston Street. The sidewalk improvements are consistent with the Boylston Street Design Guidelines, a product of the PruPAC process years ago during deliberations and review of the Prudential Center impacts. Arlington Street Church announced a multi-year renovation that will also include sidewalk improvements. Completed private-sector pieces include Walgreens, 745 Boylston, and 500 Boylston.

**4** The Paul Dudley White Bicycle Path, eight miles from Watertown to Leverett Circle along the Charles River, was created in the early 1970s. The MDC in the late summer of 1994 painted a center line and directional arrows to help coordinate the multitude of modes—pedestrians, bicycles, in-line skaters, strollers, ducks, etc.—using the path.

**The biggest Central Artery/Tunnel construction contract** issued to date will kick off the beginning of major downtown construction on the project. Construction of C11A, the area from Kneeland Street at the former Wang Building to the north side of Congress Street, is expected to start in the spring of 1995 and continue for 5 1/2 years.

This construction contract includes a segment of the tunnel for the MBTA's So. Boston Piers Transitway, the electric bus service to run from South Station. Joint construction is expected to save 40 percent of the costs. For residents and workers in the Leather District and South Station who are awaiting completion of the new bus terminal, there will be no real break.



**Filene's department store** in Downtown Crossing is planning a three-story expansion of about 47,000 sq. ft. The Filene's building is actually several buildings that have been integrated as one store. The three-story addition is proposed to be on top of 1970s, non-historic part of the store. The plan is to replace the existing façade on the 1970s part, matching it with the new façade.

Filene's states that the proposed expansion project will also "enhance the street level environment of the so-called Shoppers Park" at Washington and Franklin streets....

Now that the **Central Artery/North Area (CANA)** temporary loop ramps carry traffic to and from the tunnels under City Square, the last overhead ramps have been removed, finally allowing the light to shine on City Square. Planning for CANA began in the mid-1970s and picked up intensity about 10 years ago. Not only were the tunnels built, but also a comprehensive planning process for the new land was completed in 1988.

Yet, the intervening years brought political, economic and systemic change. As a result, only one acre of the seven acres of new land has been designed. The City Square Park is to be built soon, but the other six acres have not been relinquished by the state.

Despite the planning process undertaken by the Highway Department 10 years ago, completing the CANA project's community development goals is slow. Plans made today are often not valid tomorrow.



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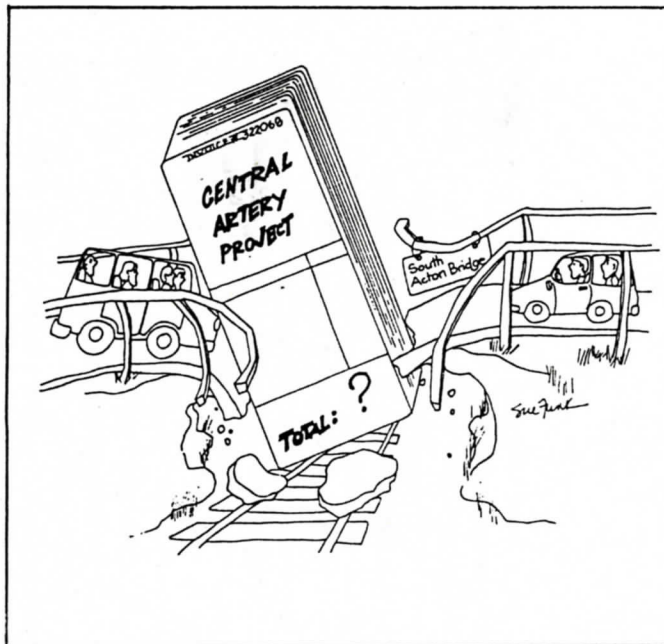
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## You were asking...

**Q. How come the sign at the State Transportation Building garage says "Public Parking," yet building management prohibits the bicycle-riding public visiting offices in the building from parking in the bicycle racks?**

**A.** There is no logical answer to this. Call R. M. Bradley, the building management, at 973-7200 to inquire.

**Q. What's happening with the New England Transportation Initiative (NETI), the regional study of transportation issues?**

**A.** A recent technical report from NETI gave the results of the technical and policy analysis of three potential "scenarios" for New England's future. The analysis shows that for New England, growing at two-thirds the national rate, to compete nationally, coordinated policies on issues including freight movement, port and airport planning, and targeting infrastructure improvements to locations with sound growth-management policies are essential. Also cited were the need for market-based pricing of highways, public-sector demonstration projects in telecommuting and teleconferencing, and the need for some highway capacity expansion in non-urban areas. Call Charles Repeta, NETI project manager, at 973-7025.

## Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*! Anthony Casendino, Anne McKinnon, Chris

## The Boston Informer

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